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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001161

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/17/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: CONGOLESE MILITARY MOVES COMMANDERS

Classified By: Poloff Meghan Moore for Reasons 1.4 B and D

11. (C) SUMMARY. The Congolese military is in the process of moving a few key military commanders. As of July 18, Kinshasa observers believed that Brigadier General Matthieu Agolowa would replace South Kivu Military Regional Commander (MRC) Mbuja Mabe, and Banyamulenge General Patrick Masunzu would be posted to Eastern Kasai as Deputy Military Regional Commander (DMRC). Mabe's long-awaited replacement is unlikely to trigger any significant popular reaction. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) In early July, the Congolese military (FARDC) published the names of a number of new MRCs and DMRCs, but did not specify where they would be deployed. As of July 18, the FARDC had not officially announced where it would assign the commanders, but Kinshasa observers generally agreed that Brigadier General Mbuja Mabe, currently MRC in Bukavu, South Kivu would be moved to the Kitona training base in Bas-Congo, and be replaced with Brigadier General Matthieu Agolowa, currently DMRC in Mbuji Mayi, Western Kasai. As of July 15, Mabe reportedly had left Bukavu, but the new MRC had not arrived. Observers also agreed that newly named DMRC General Patrick Masunzu would become the DMRC in Kananga, Eastern Kasai.

13. (C) A Bukavu-based MONUC official and a civil society member told poloff July 14 that they were glad Mabe was leaving South Kivu because he had created a lot of unnecessary tension with the Mai Mai, contributed to tension between Banyamulenge and other Congolese citizens in the province, and was generally seen as very corrupt. The civil society member said Agolowa had a decent reputation as an ex-FAZ (Armed Forces of Zaire) general. Both thought that Masunzu's transfer from Minembwe on the High Plateau, where he is seen as the Banyamulenge's protector, to another location would be delicate, but agreed that Masunzu would probably accept the re-deployment.

Comment

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14. (C) Rumors of Mabe's imminent departure from Bukavu have been circulating for months. Mabe originally made a favorable impression on Post and other observers, although he quickly became a major target for Kigali and RCD-Goma for his alleged pro-Hutu extremist views. Whatever the merits of those charges, for the past year, his poor management of the Mai Mai, questionable behavior towards the Banyamulenge, and corruption have made him increasingly unpopular. A few members of Bukavu's civil society may whine about the loss of 'Bukavu's savior' a sentiment that arose as a result of the May-June 2004 Bukavu crisis. His replacement now, however, by another ex-FAZ general from Equateur is likely to mitigate any popular negative reaction.

MEECE